



ACOTUP/ACPUE is a national organization that promotes and develops occupational therapy education and research with an understanding of issues in a global context.

NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 25 – 2015

5th ACOTUP/ACPUE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Many ACOTUP members met in beautiful Winnipeg Manitoba this past May to attend the annual CAOT conference, and participate in some of the face to face ACOTUP meetings and sessions.

For ACOTUP, the week began with their Annual General Meeting followed by the Board of Directors face to face meeting. The position of secretary/treasurer was up for renewal and Bernadette Nedelec had volunteered to remain in this role for another term. Later in the week, the ACOTUP Curriculum Coordinators enjoyed a session facilitated by Andrew Freeman and Susan Rappolt on thinking about 'proficiencies' in Entry-Level Programs, which was followed by the Education Committee session led by McMaster's Lorie Shimmell and Université de Sherbrooke's Annick Bourget which focused on OT Educators: Moving Reflective Learners into Reflective Practice.

The Committee on University Fieldwork Education (CUFE) had their annual face to face meeting, and welcomed Eric Constantin from Université de Sherbrooke as the new CUFE co-chair to join University of Toronto's Donna Barker, as Susanne Murphy from Queens' has completed her term.

The ever popular speed mentoring session ran for the third year once again bringing junior and senior researchers together over a lunch-hour for an opportunity for the mentees to gain valuable insight and advice from experienced mentors. Also, this year, the ACOTUP sponsored session was led by Clare Hocking and Liz Townsend with the theme of Driving Occupational Justice across Canada: Occupational Therapy Education and Human Rights.

Although a busy time, the 2015 ACOTUP meetings were a success, and the association is already beginning to plan for the 2016 session in Banff, and the Directors are looking forward to hosting a facilitator to help run a strategic planning session during their face to face meeting.

OT STUDENTS "SOAR" INTO PLACEMENT!



Viking Air and the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at UBC recently established an exciting new partnership.

This partnership is the first of its kind in all of Canada. It is unique in that it offer students an opportunity to practice their skills and gain knowledge in a production focused workplace environment rather than the traditional health care setting.

What is Viking Air?

Viking Air was established in 1970 as an aircraft maintenance and repair company at Victoria International airport in Sidney, British Columbia, with a focus on seaplane and utility aircrafts markets. In 2015, they celebrated the Twin Otter's 50th anniversary. To learn more about Viking Air click here. <http://www.vikingair.com>

The Innovation

Over a 14 week period, Viking Air committed to provide learning opportunities and practical experience in facilitating healthy work environments and effective return-to-work programs. In return, they hosted four students who had comprehensive knowledge of body mechanics, ergonomics and injury prevention. These students assisted with assessing and identifying methods on eliminating musculoskeletal injuries (MSI's).

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Students settled in rapidly and developed a Viking Air specific job demands analysis template that included both physical and cognitive job requirements. They also created ergonomic safe work practice information sheets for areas identified to have a high risk of MSI injuries and facilitated Lunch 'n' Learn information sessions open to all employees.

In the Words of a Student

Lauren MacDonald, UBC MOT II student, who completed a placement with Viking writes...

Viking Air has an innovative and forward-thinking cor-

porate culture. This was evidenced by their excitement to bring student OTs on board and their receptiveness to recommendations. Both the office staff and the shop floor employees made us feel right at home and gave us every opportunity to learn, try new strategies, to collaborate with other professionals, and to provide education. Being part of developing the OT role in this industry setting re-affirmed for me the core principles of OT – looking at the interaction between person, environment, and occupation and that we can truly can use our skills to effect change in any setting.

PROFESSEURS À L'HONNEUR À L'UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE

Cette chronique soulignera le remarquable corps professoral au programme d'ergothérapie de l'Université de Sherbrooke qui a été mis à l'honneur ces derniers mois. En premier lieu, pour souligner l'excellence et l'apport inestimable des bâtisseurs de ce jeune programme, nous avons inauguré un mur de reconnaissance. La première personne qui a été intronisée sur ce mur est **Pre Louise Mercier**. Pre Mercier a été l'une des fondatrices du programme d'entrée à la pratique et directrice de ce programme de 2006 à 2013. À l'approche de sa retraite, nous tenions à démontrer notre appréciation de sa carrière exceptionnelle.



Le doyen de la Faculté de médecine et des sciences de la santé a débuté cette année un tableau d'honneur des professeurs qui ont démontré une performance exceptionnelle. Les récipiendaires en ergothérapie ont été **Pres Nadine Larivière et Mélanie Levasseur**. Au gala du mérite, qui se déroule annuellement, les étudiants en ergothérapie ont remis à **M. Éric Constantin** le prix d'enseignement. Selon eux, M. Constantin est un enseignant et un coordonnateur de stage attentionné et compréhensif. Deux professeures ont été promues au rang de professeur agrégé:

Pres Mélanie Couture et Emmanuelle Jasmin. Cet accomplissement est absolument digne de mention. Enfin, **Mme Isabelle Matte**, ergothérapeute au CSSS-IUGS, a été la récipiendaire 2015 du Prix d'Excellence en enseignement clinique de l'Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes. Ce prix a pour but de reconnaître l'apport à la pratique d'une ergothérapeute qui a fait preuve d'un rendement exceptionnel en enseignement clinique auprès des étudiants, et qui représente un modèle pour inspirer les étudiants à exercer leur profession avec passion.



Nadine Larivière, directrice du programme d'ergothérapie; Carmen Moliner, coordonnatrice de stage; Suzanne Quenec'dhu, chef de service en réadaptation du CSSS-IUGS; Isabelle Matte; Éric Constantin, coordonnateur de stage.

suite...

...suite

Nous aimerions souhaiter la bienvenue à une nouvelle professeure au programme d'ergothérapie, **Mme Émilie Lagueux**. Bachelière en ergothérapie de l'Université de Montréal en 2003, elle a entrepris sa carrière d'ergothérapeute clinicienne au Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke. Elle a développé une expertise clinique en réadaptation du membre supérieur et en gestion de la douleur. Après cinq ans de pratique, elle s'est engagée dans une maîtrise en sciences cliniques à l'Université de Sherbrooke où elle a participé au développement et à l'implantation multicentrique d'un programme non-pharmacologique multimodal pour la prise en charge de la fibromyalgie et de la lombalgie. Elle a complété de pair, durant cette période, un microprogramme de 2e cycle en gestion de la douleur à l'Université de Sherbrooke. Elle a poursuivi ses études doctorales en sciences cliniques où elle s'est intéressée à évaluer l'efficacité clinique de l'ajout de la stimulation transcrânienne par courant direct à une modalité conventionnelle utilisée en ergothérapie, l'imagerie motrice progressive dans le traitement du syndrome

douloureux régional complexe. En parallèle, elle a effectué un microprogramme de 2e cycle en pédagogie des sciences de la santé. Ses principaux intérêts de recherche sont liés à l'évaluation et au traitement de la douleur en ergothérapie. Pour terminer, nous souhaitons vous informer que dès août 2016, nous accueillerons des étudiants universitaires canadiens non-résidents du Québec. Ceux-ci devront démontrer une très bonne maîtrise du français ou réussir un examen de français au préalable. Plus de détails seront fournis sur notre site web en octobre 2015.



Bulletin rédigé par Nadine Larivière, erg. PhD, directrice du programme d'ergothérapie de l'Université de Sherbrooke

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO UPDATES

CAOT Conference - Awards

Three U of T faculty members were honoured with special awards at the CAOT conference in Winnipeg:

Dr. Bonnie Kirsh gave the 2015 Muriel Driver Lecture, the highest honour awarded by CAOT for an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession through research, education and the practice of occupational therapy.

Professor Pat McKee was one of three recipients of a CAOT Life Membership Award in recognition of her numerous contributions to the Occupational Therapist profession.

Dr. Alex Mihailidis, whose background is engineering and who continues to develop technologies to support and assist older adults, was awarded an Honorary Membership in CAOT for his contributions to occupational therapy.

Angela Colantonio

Dr. Angela Colantonio has been appointed Director of the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute, beginning in September for a 5-year term. Angela was also recently elected as a fellow to the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, and is the recipient of the 2015 Robert L. Moody Prize for Distinguished Initiatives in Brain Injury Research and Rehabilitation.

Congratulations to Dr. Lynn Cockburn on receiving the 2015 OT Alumni Achievement Award!

The Occupational Therapy Alumni Achievement Award was presented to Lynn Cockburn at the Alumni Spring Reunion on May 29th by Biraj Khosla, Chair, UofT PT/OT Alumni Achievement Award Committee.

WESTERN UNIVERSITY IS INTRODUCING

The World's First and Only

DRIVING REHABILITATION THERAPY

Master of Clinical Science (MClSc) Program

**IN 12 MONTHS, BECOME AN ENTRY-LEVEL
DRIVING REHABILITATION THERAPIST**

What is a Driving Rehabilitation Therapist?

Driving Rehabilitation Therapists are skilled health care professionals who work with drivers across the lifespan who may have cognitive, sensory, and/or physical challenges that may interfere with their ability to operate a vehicle. Driving Rehabilitation Therapists conduct evaluations and interventions to help drivers maximize their independence in driving and community mobility.

Who can enrol in the program?

Students in the program are required to be regulated/licensed health care professionals and have two years of clinical experience in occupational therapy, physiotherapy/physical therapy, speech and language pathology, nursing, kinesiology or audiology.

Why become a Driving Rehabilitation Therapist?

With increased awareness of road safety and enhancing people's ability to maintain independence, the need for Driving Rehabilitation Therapists is greater than ever. A career as a Driving Rehabilitation Therapist provides the opportunity to work in private practice, hospital settings or academic/research institutions.

About the Driving Rehabilitation Therapy program

The first of its kind in the world, Western's DRT program was designed for the working professional and trains students for careers as entry-level Driving Rehabilitation Therapists. Many of the course requirements can be completed through distance learning. The 12-month program allows students to complete coursework and on-site experiences while still working full time.

Apply now

Applications for this new and innovative program are now being accepted. Pending final program approval, admitted students could begin the program as early as January 2016.

For more information

Learn more about this program by visiting our website or contacting:

Andrea Baker
Graduate Program Assistant
Western University – School of Occupational Therapy
abaker56@uwo.ca
519-661-2111 x82184
www.westernu.ca/fhs/ot



NORTHERN HEALTH STUDENT TRAVELING ROADSHOW SHOWCASES OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

UBC STUDENTS INSPIRE HIGH SCHOOL KIDS TO PURSUE HEALTH CARE CAREERS!

The Recent Health Care Traveling Road show provided an opportunity for healthcare professional students from the North and rural BC to travel to the communities of Fort St. John, Dawson Creek and Tumbler Ridge located in the Peace River Regional District. This was an opportunity for students to share their passion for healthcare with local high school students and in turn, have the local community share their passion for northern/rural practice and living. This experience also provided opportunity for:

- Exposure to northern clinical practice
- Exposure to living & working in beautiful Northern BC and,
- An opportunity to learn from other healthcare students.

For one week in June, Liv Brekke, UBC MOT I student was part of the Healthcare Traveling Roadshow. This year's Roadshow included 14 health care students representing 9 different professions touring 3 different communities in Northern BC.

Liv kindly shares some highlights of her experience.

At the high schools, the majority of our time was spent interacting with small groups of students at hands-on stations. In the OT area of the "rehab department" (the PT/OT station), some of the opportunities for students included:

- assembling and riding a wheelchair;
- calibrating a pressure-relieving cushion;
- using a sock aid;
- and trying on different splints.

The wheelchair obstacle course was definitely the highlight for most students! For me, talking about Occupational Therapy with the students really helped reinvigorate my passion for our awesome profession. It's pretty humbling to think that, thanks to the Roadshow, hundreds of kids have now heard about and experienced OT!



One aspect of the presentations we did, was that we were able to visit each other's stations. I probably learned just as much about my peers' professions as most of the students did. Among many other things, I learned what a medical engineering technologist is and that medical radiation technologists are anatomy whizzes. I even got to try intubating a training dummy!

One of the highlights of the experience was immersing myself in the 3 Northern communities. We had tours of the Fort St. John Hospital, Dawson Creek and District Hospital, and Tumbler Ridge Health Centre. There were also numerous recreational opportunities including:

- wheelchair basketball at the Pomeroy Sports Centre in Fort St. John;
- a jet boat tour of the Peace River followed by a picnic BBQ, courtesy of local residents;
- golfing and dinner in Taylor, BC;
- a backstage tour of the Paleontology Research Centre in Tumbler Ridge; and,
- a boat trip to Kinuseo Falls

To summarize, my experience with the Healthcare Traveling Roadshow was all about connecting with the community. The Roadshow delivered on the promise of an opportunity to educate and engage others about Occupational Therapy. However, the trip also became about building a new interprofessional community with my peers. What surprised and impressed me most, was the incredibly warm and friendly welcome we received in each and every place we visited.

So if you're looking for a place with amazing recreational opportunities, where they welcome strangers as friends, and where OT can really make a difference, rural and northern BC is for you! I certainly hope I will be back there one day soon.



QUEEN'S OT PROGRAM HOSTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FORUM

On Thursday, April 16, 2015, the Queen's Occupational Therapy Program was pleased to host a Community Development Forum to celebrate the work of occupational therapy (OT) students and local community partners. Community Development Fieldwork Coordinator Megan Edgelow, OT Program members, and the OT Class of 2015 welcomed more than 30 community members to the showcase of student work in the local region.

Last held in 2011, this event was re-introduced to highlight the work of OT students in their Community Development course (OT861) and Community Development fieldwork placement (OT862). In their final semester at Queen's, students spend time in the classroom learning the theory and practice of community development, and take part in community-based fieldwork to apply their newly learned skills in a real-world setting.

The goal of the fieldwork placement is to provide the opportunity for students to explore the process of working with communities to enable occupation and to create inclusive communities and environments.

Community organizations in the Kingston and Napanee area host placements for the students, who each com-

plete 185 hours of fieldwork at their host site. There are many long-standing partnerships in the area, and this year we were pleased to welcome new partnerships with the Kingston Victorian Order of Nurses and the Kingston Military Family Resource Centre.

Student projects this year included nurturing new relationships between community organizations, competing needs assessments, engaging service recipients, completing service and program development, and creating products and tools for use by community organizations.

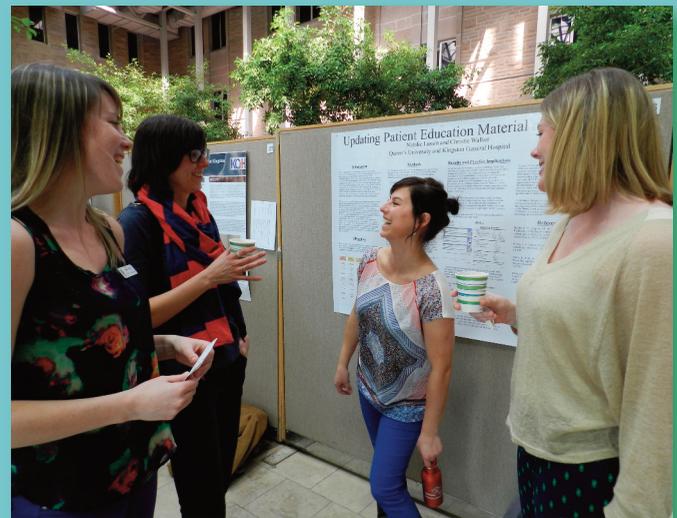
To celebrate the work of the students and their partner organizations, the April 16 Forum allowed students to present their work to the community, as well as community members to attend and network with the students and other community organizations.

It was a resounding success, with over 80 OT students showcasing their contributions, and 10 university members attending to welcome more than 30 community partners. We look forward to continuing these productive partnerships and celebrations in 2016!

**A note of thanks goes to Susanne Murphy for taking photographs at the event.*



Adam Broad (C) and Ashleigh Blinkhorn (L) share their poster with fellow OT student Pablo Chang (R).



OT students (L to R) Emma Haley, Lyn Heinemann, Natalie Lussin and Christie Walker share a laugh during the Community Development Forum.

ACOTUP RESEARCHERS' PROFILES

Name of Researcher: William (Bill) C. Miller, UBC

Degrees and Professional Qualifications (including fellowships): Post-doc (Rehabilitation Sciences); PhD (Epidemiology & Biostatistics); MScOT; BSc OT

Area of Research: My research expertise/interests centre around the measurement, epidemiological understanding, and examination of interventions on mobility disability in adults, particularly on its influence on the participation of daily/social activities. Much of my work has focused on falls, balance and mobility self-efficacy. Recently I've focused on wheelchair use, training, wheelchair design, and e-health, or the use of tablets to provide mobility interventions.

Research Related Awards and Honours:

- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists Fellowship (FCAOT), CAOT (2010)
- New Investigators Career Scientist Award, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) (2005-10)
- Salary Support, Post-doctoral fellowship, Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (2001-04)

Grants/Funding History:

- W.C. Miller, R. Routhier, J.J. Eng, C. H. Goldsmith, K. Best. (2013-15). Wheelchair Self-efficacy Enhanced training program to improve wheelchair use in older adults: The WheelSeeU feasibility study. CIHR Operating Grant (\$181,000)
- W.C. Miller, A. Mihailidis, A. Mackworth, L. Demers, R.L. Kirby, et al. (2009-15). Wheeled Mobility for Older Adults. CIHR emerging Team Grant (\$1.48 million).

- W.C. Miller, L. Boronowski, L. Demers, R. Kirby, S. Rowe, P. Rushton. (2013-14). Knowledge translation of a wheelchair skills program for rehabilitation clinicians: A feasibility study. CIHR Knowledge to Action (\$194,000).

Research Collaboration: The CanWheel Emerging CIHR Team in Wheeled Mobility for Older Adults: I recruited this team of 16 investigators from across Canada to come together with a mandate to improve wheeled mobility for vulnerable older adults with mobility limitations. The diverse team consists of experts in the fields of biomechanics, computer science, engineering, epidemiology, gerontology, occupational therapy, psychiatry, and sociology representing 4 provinces and 6 academic institutions. Together we have developed a program of research spanning 5 key research projects to be conducted over a 6-year period. Put simply, our research will address: 1) how older adults use their power wheelchairs; 2) how power wheelchairs can be better designed through collaborative control (wheelchair user working in conjunction with the power wheelchair); and 3) how to better train individuals to use their power wheelchairs. We have also validated a Power Mobility toolkit to better measure important aspects of power wheelchair use including social participation and caregiver burden.

To view this profile in its entirety, please click here <http://www.acotup-acpue.ca/English/sites/default/files/Profiles/Bill%20Miller%20%28University%20of%20British%20Columbia%29.pdf>

Name of Researcher: Annie Rochette, Université de Montreal

Degrees and Professional Qualifications (including fellowships): PhD (Clinical Sciences), MSc (Clinical Sciences) BSc (OT)

Area of Research: Keywords: Social participation; Prevention; Adaptation processes; Support; Information; Education; Applying knowledge; Stroke.

Stroke prevention and rehabilitation from an application of knowledge perspective. My current research program, centred on the cycle of knowledge application, mainly targets clients who have had a stroke, their family members, and healthcare

practitioners working with these clients. It contains two components, which are in continuity with my past work. The first concerns the creation of knowledge in regards to preventing a stroke but in a way that has been studied very little up until now (triggers) and where we attempt to answer the question "why that day?". The second, via the pursuit of developing an internationally recognized website: StrokEngine/Info-AVC (www.strokengine.ca), aims to make the most recent conclusive data on stroke rehabilitation available to health practitioners, people who have had a stroke, and their family members.

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Research Related Awards and Honours:

- Research Scholar Junior 2 (2014-17)
- Research Scholar Junior 1 (2009-13)
- Alfred B Grossman Award (2011)

Grants/Funding History:

- Rochette A. & StrokEngine team (2014-15). One time grant for the website www.strokeengine.ca. Vice-President, Research, Creation and Innovation, Université de Montreal (\$15,000).
- Rochette A, Swaine B, Kehayia E & Roche L. (2014). Exploring the impact of training for shopping centre workers who interact with people who have functional limitations. Structuring and Innovation Project Centre of Interdisciplinary Research in Rehabilitation (PSI-CRIR) (\$15,000).
- Annie Rochette, Yan Deschaintre, Laurie Chamelian &

Lucie Hébert et Philippe Gaulin (2011-14). Stroke triggers according to a phenomenological perspective. Quebec Heart Disease Foundation (\$45,000).

Research Collaboration: Collaborations with senior researchers who assure a form of mentorship and do not hesitate to offer constructive feedback. They know how to be critical and insightful when it comes to pertinence, scientific quality and feasibility of research projects. Collaborations with health practitioners and managers who reflect the reality of the clinical environment, allow one to see the challenges related to applying knowledge gained from research, and the possible results of our work.

To view this profile in its entirety, please click [here \(http://www.acotup-acpue.ca/English/sites/default/files/Profiles/Annie%20Rochette%20%28Universite%20de%20Montreal%29.pdf\)](http://www.acotup-acpue.ca/English/sites/default/files/Profiles/Annie%20Rochette%20%28Universite%20de%20Montreal%29.pdf)

MCGILL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

PRESS RELEASE: Montreal: To stay current with what's happening at McGill's School of Physical & Occupational Therapy (SPOT), check out the School's website www.mcgill.ca/spot or join the group on Facebook or LinkedIn.

McGill alumni who attended the CAOT Conference in May, in Winnipeg, had a great time re-connecting and enjoying the snack and refreshments at the McGill Alumni Reunion wine and cheese!

Worth mentioning they might have been celebrating the naming of Dr. Isabelle Gélinas, Director of the Graduate Program at McGill's SPOT (photo, centre, with Lori Cyr, CAOT President on the left and Janet Craik, CAOT Executive Director on the right) as next year's Muriel Driver Memorial Lecturer. (photo credit: CAOT)



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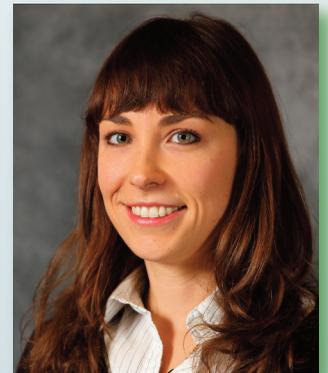
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Technology is everywhere in our lives nowadays. Under the leadership of Dr. Sara Saunders (Associate Director of the OT Program at McGill's SPOT) and with Prof. Hiba Zafran, McGill OT students have a new and exciting opportunity: they can apply to complete a clinical placement in the McGill Community: evaluation employee work-stations and making recommendations.

Working in pairs under the guidance of their supervisors, they observe the work space, take measurements of the physical environment and of the employee, discuss work tasks with the employee, analyze the situation and recommend possible solutions. This is a terrific example of outreach in clinical education, and promotion of OT to a population that may not be aware of the profession and the value of a referral. (photo credit: S.C. Marshall)



McGill's SPOT has hired a new tenure-track faculty member for the Fall: Dr. Marie-Brossard-Racine. She comes to McGill by way of a post-doctoral fellowship in diagnostic imaging and radiology with Drs. Catherine Limperopoulos and Adre de Plessis at the Advanced Pediatric Brain Imaging Research Laboratory of the Children's National Medical Center (Washington, DC). Dr. Brossard-Racine's research interests are to better understand the neural mechanisms underlying activity limitation in children with developmental disabilities. Her focus on the combination of outcome oriented clinical research with neuroimaging techniques provides a unique understanding of the neural substrates of childhood disabilities. These technologies are also crucial in evidence-based guideline developments and uptake to improve clinical practice and patient outcome, knowledge synthesis, implementation research and professional behaviour change. (photo credit: O. Egan)



DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Cutting-edge Research Sharpens the Focus on Stroke Rehabilitation

Stroke is the leading cause of long-term disability in Canada. More than half of stroke survivors experience impacts on cognitive function that affect their daily occupations. Accuracy in the assessment of these impacts is crucial if intervention is to be targeted to maximize recovery.

Dr. Diane MacKenzie, Assistant Professor at Dalhousie University, has recently been awarded funding through the Canada Foundation for Innovation, which will support the establishment of the infrastructure required to advance the interdisciplinary study of how observation actually occurs in real-world cognitive assessments. Dr. MacKenzie will serve as the Principal Investigator of the project known as iCARE (inter-professional Centre

of Attention in Real Environments).

Dr. MacKenzie noted, "clinicians routinely observe, describe and interpret visual information, but little attention has been given to the act of observation itself. It is often assumed that everyone either has natural (and accurate) observation skills or that they will develop these skills. Errors in observation, either from not seeing key features, or from misinterpreting what has been observed, can lead to inaccurate decision-making." This research aims to improve clinical observation, resulting in earlier and more accurate detection of cognitive issues, improved decision-making, and overall better outcomes for survivors of stroke.

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The research will involve the use of mobile eye-trackers, designed to be worn like a pair of glasses. This allows accurate monitoring of where, when and what the eyes of the observer specifically focus on. In addition, the mobile eye-trackers can be worn by patients to track eye-movements as part of the assessment process, recording where patients direct their actions or how they respond to specific events that occur as they carry out real-world activities.

By studying visual attention errors, iCARE is designed to improve the functional outcome of patients with cognitive dysfunction following stroke by targeting three areas all critically affected by attention: observer accuracy, cognitive assessment and intervention accuracy, and team collaboration. The long-term outcome of this line of research will help establish interpretive observation guidelines for observation of cognition during functional tasks to assist clinicians

with decision-making and selection of best practice interventions.

The School of Occupational Therapy looks forward to Dr. MacKenzie establishing this innovative, interdisciplinary research laboratory, and the cutting-edge research findings that will support better outcomes for stroke survivors.

For more information:

MacKenzie, D.E., & Westwood, D.A. Observation patterns of dynamic occupational performance. (2013). Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 80(2), 92-100. doi: 10.1177/0008417413484885

MacKenzie, D.E., & Westwood, D.A. (2013). Occupational therapists and observation: What are you looking at? Occupational Therapy Journal of Research: Occupation, Participation and Health, 33, 4-11. doi: 10.3928/15394492-20120928-01

EXPANDING ORIENTATION WEEK: LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING

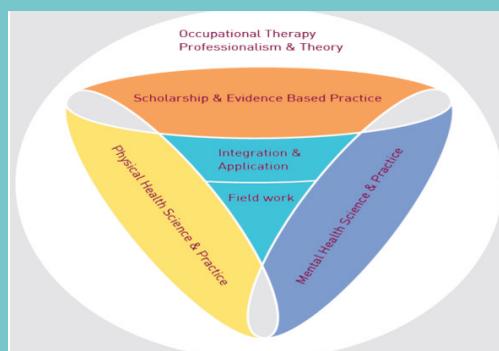
Written by Jutta Hinrichs and Cori Schmitz

Each year 120+ students commence the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MScOT) program at the University of Alberta (UofA). Historically, our practice has been to hold various orientation activities on the first day the students arrive before commencing formal classes. In the fall of 2014, a new initiative was piloted for orienting first year occupational therapy students that would lay a strong foundation for the curriculum content they would encounter during their 26 months in the program. Specifically Orientation & Foundation Week (Foundation Week) was developed to:

- Introduce key concepts and core skills that are the basis of many courses
- Establish a foundational context for ongoing curriculum content and themes
- Proactively address student access to campus resources and support services
- Initiate student-staff relationships

The mandatory, four day Foundation Week was developed utilizing small and large group sessions at our main Edmonton campus (100 students) and our satellite Calgary campus (22 students). The Calgary students traveled to Edmonton and joined the Edmonton students for the final 1.5 days of the week's activities.

Activities and topics were chosen that linked to the UofA MScOT curriculum theme model depicted in the diagram below:



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In plenary sessions, topics of MScOT curriculum philosophy & overview, introduction to occupation, introduction to graduate-level writing, fieldwork orientation, and professionalism were covered. Students were also divided into smaller groups for interactive, practical sessions on therapeutic use of self & interviewing skills, safe client handling skills & therapeutic touch, and a thorough orientation to the UofA Libraries & RefWorks®. 'Occupation' through self-care, productivity and leisure was introduced on the first day and students completed a photography activity to capture images of 'occupation' which were profiled in a slide show at the end of the week. To build relationships amongst the students and between the students and staff, various lunches, a wrap-up BBQ and other student-led social activities were scheduled throughout the week. A hugely successful 'Meet Your Professors' mini-conference was organized on one of the afternoons that gave students the opportunity to interact directly with staff and learn about the research interests of specific faculty members.

To gauge the success of this new initiative, a survey was completed by the students one month post Foundation Week. The survey included open-ended questions as well as 5-point Likert Scales to elicit student perspectives regarding the relevance of the various activities. Therapeutic use of self, client handling skills, curriculum philosophy & overview, introduction to occupation and the mini conference were rated as very or highly relevant. Overall, students indicated that Foundation Week was a valuable experience (Edmonton 93%, Calgary 81%). Emerging themes from the survey were that the week:

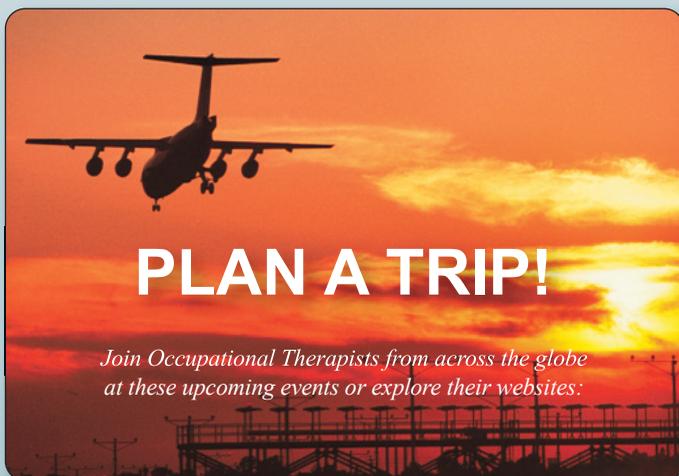
helped ease transition into the program, helped students to understand what to expect, and was a good opportunity to get to know classmates and professors. The latter point was particularly relevant as students in Edmonton and Calgary had a chance to get to know each other and the Calgary students had the chance to meet the professors face-to-face prior to any lecturing via the video-conferencing system.

Informal feedback from the faculty reported an increased familiarity with students early in the program, which enhanced communication and eased issues re: professionalism. Faculty also observed increased student awareness of core content and curricular themes throughout year one of the program. Despite the positive student response, faculty noted that it was too early in the program to introduce client handling skills. For the coming year, an interactive, introductory session on clinical reasoning and reflective practice will be introduced in its place.

Yes - it is planned to continue Orientation & Foundation Week, as the pilot was successful and the objectives were achieved. We look forward to greeting our next cohort of MScOT students at both our campuses in September 2015!

Jutta Hinrichs is the Calgary & Southern Alberta Clinical Education Coordinator and an instructor at the University of Alberta Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, Department of Occupational Therapy satellite campus in Calgary, Alberta.

Cori Schmitz is the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education of the MScOT program and an Assistant Professor at the University of Alberta Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, Department of Occupational Therapy in Edmonton, Alberta.



Rio de Janeiro
XIV Brazilian Conference of Occupational Therapy
Theme: Citizenship and Human Rights: From Financing to Practice
October 12-15, 2015
www.atoerj.org.br

Birmingham, UK
Occupational Therapy Show 2015
November 25-26
Hall 9, NEC, Birmingham, B40 1NT
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Singapore
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